

THE MINOR.

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1475 a 42

A COMEDY.

WRITTEN BY

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

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TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER'S BOOK,

AT THE

Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane.

L O N D O N:

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

M E N.

Sir William Wealthy,	—	Mr. Baddeley.
Mr. Richard Wealthy,	—	Mr. Staunton.
Sir George Wealthy,	—	Mr. Whitfield.
Shift and Smirk,	—	Mr. Bannister, Junr.
Loader,	—	Mr. R. Palmer.
Dick,	—	Mr. Burton.
Servant,	—	Mr. Alfred.

W O M E N.

Mrs. Cole,	—	Mr. Bannister.
Lucy,	—	Miss Collins.

T H E M I N O R.

ACT I. SCENE a chamber.

Enter Sir William Wealthy and Mr. Richard Wealthy.

R. Weal. **L**OOK'E, brother, you know my mind. I will be absolute. If I meddle with the management of your son, it is at your own request; but if, directly or indirectly you interfere with my banishment of that wilful, headstrong, disobedient hussy, all ties between us are broke; and I shall no more remember you as a brother, than I do her as a child.

Sir Will. I have done. But to return. You think there is a probability in my plan?

R. Weal. I shall attend the issue.

Sir Will. You will lend your aid, however?

R. Weal. We shall see how you go on. *Enter Servant.*

Serv. A letter, Sir.

Sir Will. Oh, from Capias, my attorney. Who brought it?

Serv. The person is without, Sir.

Sir Will. Bid him wait. *[Exit Servant. [Reads.]*

"Worthy Sir,

The bearer is the person I promised to procure. I thought it was proper for you to examine him viva voce. So if you administer a few interrogatories, you will find, by cross-questioning him, whether he is a competent person to prosecute the cause you wot of. I wish you a speedy issue: and as there can be no default in your judgment, am of opinion it should be carried into immediate execution.

I am, worthy Sir &c.

TIMOTHY CAPIAS."

P. S. The party's name is Samuel Shift. He is an admirable mime, or mimic, and most delectable company; as we experience every Tuesday night, at our club, the Mag-pye and Horse-shoe, Fetter lane.

Very methodical indeed, Mr. Capias! John.

Enter Servant.

Bid the person who brought this letter, walk in. *[Exit Servant.]* Have you any curiosity, brother?

R. Weal. Not a jot. I must to the 'Change. In the evening you may find me in the counting-house, or at the Stock Exchange. *[Exit R. Wealthy.]*

Sir Will. You shall hear from me.

Enter Shift and Servant.

Shut the door, John, and remember, I am not at home, *[Exit Servant]* You came from Mr. Capias?

Shift. I did, Sir.

Sir Will. Your name, I think, is Shift?

Shift. It is, Sir

Sir Will. Did Mr. Capias drop any hint of my business with you?

Shift. None. He only said, with his spectacles on his nose, and his hand upon his chin, Sir William Wealthy is a respectable personage, and my client; he wants to retain you in a certain affair, and will open the case, and give you your brief himself: if you adhere to his instructions, and carry your cause, he is generous, and will discharge your bill without taxation.

Sir Will. Ha! ha! my friend Capias to a hair! Well, Sir, this is no bad specimen of your abilities. But see that the door is fast. Now, Sir, you are to——

Shift. A moment's pause, if you please. You must know, Sir William, I am a prodigious admirer of forms. Now, Mr. Capias tells me, that it is always the rule, to administer a retaining fee before you enter upon the merits.

Sir Will. Oh, Sir, I beg your pardon! [*Gives him money.*]

Shift. Not that I question your generosity; but forms, you know——

Sir Will. No apology, I beg. But as we are to have a closer connection, it may not be amiss, by way of introduction, to understand one another a little. Pray, Sir, where was you born?

Shift. At my father's.

Sir Will. Hum!——And what was he?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. What was you bred?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. How do you live?

Shift. Like a gentleman.

Sir Will. Could nothing induce you to unbosom yourself?

Shift. Look'ye, Sir William, there is a kind of something in your countenance, a certain openness and generosity, a je ne sçai quoi in your manner, that I will unlock: You shall see me all.

Sir Will. You will oblige me.

Shift. You must know, then, that Fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who from a taylor made a pope, from a gin shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all, has thought fit to raise me to my present height, from the humble employment of light your honour——A link boy.

Sir Will. A pleasant fellow.—Who were your parents?

Shift.

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Shift. I was produced, Sir, by a left-handed marriage; in the language of the news-papers, between an illustrious lamp-lighter and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher. — Cat's meat and dog's meat. — I dare say, you have heard my mother, Sir. But, as to this happy pair I owe little besides my being; I shall drop them where they dropt me—in the street.

Sir Will. Proceed.

Shift. My first knowledge of the world I owe to a school, which has produced many a great man; the avenues of the play-house. There, Sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learn'd dexterity from pick-pockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashions from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters. Here, firrah, light me acrots the kennel.—I hope your honour will remember poor Jack.—You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence—I'll pay you the next time I see you.—But, lack-a-day, Sir, that time I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.

Sir Will. Very well.

Shift. To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.

Sir Will. How did you gain admittance there?

Shift. My merit, Sir, that, like my link, threw a radiance round me—A detachment from the head quarters here, took possession, in the summer, of a country corporation, where I did the honours of the barn, by sweeping the stage, and clipping the candles. There my skill and address were so conspicuous, that it procured me the same office, the ensuing winter, at Drury Lane, where I acquired intrepidity; the crown of all my virtues.

Sir Will. How did you obtain that?

Shift. By my post. For I think, Sir, he that dares stand the shot of the gallery in lighting, snuffing, and sweeping, the first night of a new play, may bid defiance to the pillory, with all its customary compliments.

Sir Will. Some truth in that.

Shift. But an unlucky crab apple, applied to my right eye by a patriot gingerbread baker, from the Borough, who would not suffer three dancers from Switzerland, because he hated the French, forced me to a precipitate retreat.

Sir Will. Poor devil!

Shift. Broglie and Contades have done the same. But, as it happened, like a tennis-ball, I rose higher from the rebound.

Sir Will. How so?

Shift. My misfortune moved the compassion of one of

the performers, a whimsical man, he took me into his service. To him Lowe, what I believe, will make me useful to you.

Sir Will. Explain.

Shift. Why, Sir, my master was remarkably happy in an art, which, however disesteem'd at present, is, by Tully reckon'd amongst the perfections of an orator; mimickry.

Sir Will. Why, you are deeply read, Mr. Shift!

Shift. A smattering — But, as I was saying, Sir, nothing came amiss to my master: Bipedes or quadrupeds; rationals or animals; from the clamour of the bar, to the cackle of the barn-door; from the soporific twang of the tabernacle of Tottenham-court, to the melodious bray of their long-eared brethren in Bunhill fields; all were objects of his imitation and my attention. In a word, Sir, for two whole years, under this professor, I studied and starved, impoverished my body and pampered my mind; till thinking myself pretty near equal to my master, I made him one of his own bows, and set up for myself.

Sir Will. You have been successful, I hope.

Shift. Pretty well. I can't complain. My art, Sir, is a *passé-par tout*. I seldom want employment. Let's see how I stand in engagements. [*Pulls out a pocket-book.*] Hum—hum—and Friday I am to give the amorous parley of two intriguing cats in a gutter, with the disturbing of a hen-roost, at Mr. Deputy Sugarlop's, near the Monument. So, Sir, you see my hands are full. In short, Sir William, there is not a buck or a turtle devoured within the bills of mortality, but there I may, if I please, stick a napkin under my chin.

Sir Will. I'm afraid, Mr. Shift, I must break in a little upon your engagements; but you shall be no loser by the bargain.

Shift. Command me.

Sir Will. You must know, then, the hopes of our family are, Mr. Shift, centered in one boy.

Shift. And I warrant he is a hopeful one.

Sir Will. No interruption, I beg. George has been abroad these four years, and from his late behaviour, I have reason to believe, that had a certain event happened, which I am afraid he wished,—my death—

Shift. Yes; that's natural enough.

Sir Will. Nay, pray,—there would soon be an end to an ancient and honourable family.

Shift. Very melancholy, indeed.

Sir Will. George, as I have contrived it, shall experience

the misery of real ruin, without running the least risque.

Shift. Ay, that will be a *coup de maitre*.

Sir Will. My brother, some time since wrote him a circumstantial account of my death; upon which, he is return'd, in full expectation of succeeding to my estate.

Shift. Immediately?

Sir Will. No; when at age. In about three months.

Shift. I understand you.

Sir William. Now, Sir, guessing into what hands my heedless boy would naturally fall, on his return, I have, in a feigned character, associated myself with a set of rascals, who will spread every bate that can flatter folly, inflame extravagance, allure inexperience, or catch credulity. And when, by their means, he thinks himself reduced to the last extremity; lost even to the most distant hope—

Shift. What then?

Sir Will. Then will I step in, like his guardian-angel, and snatch him from perdition.

Shift. But what part am I to sustain in this drama?

Sir Will. Why, George, you are to know, is already stript of what money he could command, by two sharpers: but as I never trust them out of my sight, they can't deceive me.

Shift. Out of your sight!

Sir Will. Why, I tell thee, I am one of the knot: an adept in their science, can slip, shuffle, cog, or cut with the best of 'em.

Shift. How do you escape your son's notice?

Sir Will. His firm persuasion of my death, with the extravagance of my disguise.—Why, I would engage to elude your penetration, when I am beau'd out for the Baron. But of that by and by. You have attended auctions?

Shift. Auctions! a constant puff. Deep in the mystery.

Sir Will. One of these insinuating, oily orators, I will get you to personate: for we must have the plate and jewels in our possession, or they will soon fall into other hands.

Shift. I will do it.

Sir Will. Within I'll give you farther instructions.

Shift. I'll follow you.

Sir Will. [Going, returns.] You will want materials.

Shift. Oh, my dress I can be furnish'd with in five minutes. [Exit Sir Will.] A whimsical old blade this. I shall laugh if this scheme miscarries. I have a strange mind to lend it a lift—never had a greater—Pho, a damn'd unnatural connection this of mine! What have I to do with fathers and guardians! a parcel of preaching, prudent, careful, cur-

curmudgeonly——dead to pleasures themselves, and the blasters of it in others. Mere dogs in a manger—No, no, I'll veer, tack about, open my budget to the boy; and join in a counter-plot. But, hold, hold, friend Stephen, see first how the land lies. Who knows whether this Germanized genius has parts to comprehend, or spirit to reward thy merit. There's danger in that ay, marry is there. 'Egad before I shift the helm, I'll first examine the coast; and then, if there be but a bold shore and a good bottom, have a care, old square Toes, you will meet with your match. [*Ex.*]

SCENE II. *a chamber at Sir George's.*

Enter Sir George, Loader, and Dick.

Sir Geo. Let the Martin pannels for the vis-a-vis be carried to Long-Acre, and the pyc-balls sent to Hall's to be bitted—You will give me leave to be in your debt till the evening, Mr. Loader. I have just enough left to discharge the Baron; and we must, you know, be punctual with him, for the credit of the country.

Load. Fire him, a snub nosed son of a bitch. Levant me, but he got enough last night to purchase a principality amongst his countrymen, the High-dutchians and Hussarians.

Sir Geo. You had your share, Mr. Loader.

Load. Who, I! Lurch me at four, but I was mark'd to the top of your trick, by the Baron, my dear. What, I am no cinque and quatre-man. Come, shall we have a dip in the history of the Four Kings this morning?

Sir Geo. Rather too early. Besides, it is the rule abroad, never to engage a fresh, till our old scores are discharg'd.

Load. Oport me, but those lads abroad are pretty fellows, let 'em say what they will. Here, Sir, they will vowel you, from father to son, to the twentieth generation. They would as soon now-a-days pay a tradesman's bill, as a play debt. All sense of honour is gone, not a fliver stirring. They could as soon raise the dead as two pounds two; nick me, but I have a great mind to tie up, and ruin the rascals.—What, has Transfer been here this morning?

Sir Geo. Any body here this morning, Dick?

Dick. No body, your honour.

Load. Repique the rascal. He promised to be here before me.

Dick. I beg your honour's pardon. Mrs. Cole from the Piazza was here, between seven and eight.

Sir Geo. An early hour for a lady of her calling.

Dick. Mercy on me! The poor gentlewoman is mortally altered since we used to lodge there, in our jaunts from Oxford;

Oxford ; wrapt up in flannels ; all over the rheumatise.

Load. Ay, ay, old Moll is at her last stake.

Dick. She bade me say, she just stopt in her way to the Tabernacle ; after the exhortation, she says, she'll call again.

Sir Geo. Exhortation ! Oh, I recollect. Well, whilst they only make profelytes from that profession, they are heartily welcome to them. She does not mean to make me a convert ?

Dick. I believe she has some such design upon me ; for she offered me a book of hymns, a shilling, and a dram, to go along with her.

Sir Geo. No bad scheme, Dick. Thou hast a fine, sober, psalm-singing countenance ; and when thou hast been some time in their trammels, may't make as able a teacher as the best of 'em.

Dick. Laud, Sir, I want learning.

Sir Geo. Oh, the spirit, the spirit will supply all that, Dick, never fear. [Exit Dick.]

Enter Sir William, as a German Baron.

My dear Baron, what news from the Haymarket ? What says the Florenza ? Does she yield ? Shall I be happy ? Say yes, and command my fortune.

Sir Will. I was never did see so fine a woman since I was leave Hamburgh ; dere was all de colour, all red and white, dat was quite natural ; point d'artifice. Then she was dance and sing —— I vow to heaven, I was never see de like !

Sir Geo. But how did she receive my embassy ? What hopes ?

Sir Will. Why dere was, Monsieur le Chevalier, when I first enter, dree or four damn'd queer people ; ah ah, dought I, by Gad I guess your business. Dere was one fat big woman's, dat I know long time : le valet de chambre was tell me dat she came from a grand merchand ; ha, ha, dought I, by your leave, flick to your shop ; or, if you must have de pretty girl, dere is de play-hous, dat do very well for you ; but for de opera, pardonnez, by Gar dat is meat for your master.

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic !—but she despised him ?

Sir Will. Ah, may foy, he is dam'd rich, has beaucoup de guineas ; but after de fat woman was go, I was tell the Signora, Madam, der is one certain chevalier of dis country, who has travell'd, see de world, bien fait, well made, beaucoup d'Esprit, a great deal of monies, who beg, by Gar, to have de honour to drow himself at your feet.

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Well, well, Baron.

Sir Will. She asks your name; as soon as I tell her, aha, by Gar, dans an instant, she melt like lomp of sugar: she run to her bureau, and, in de minute, return wid de paper.

Sir Geo. Give it me.

[*Reads.*

Les preliminaries d'une traité entre le Chevalier Wealthy, and la Signora Diamanti.

A bagatelle, a trifle: she shall have it.

Lord. Hark'e, knight, what is all that there outlandish stuff?

Sir Geo. Read, read! The eloquence of angels, my dear Baron!

Lord. S'am me, but the man's mad! I don't understand their gibberish. — What is it in English?

Sir Geo. The preliminaries of a subsidy treaty between Sir G. Wealthy, and Signora Florenza; that the said signora will resign the possession of her person to the said Sir George, on the payment of three hundred guineas monthly, for equipage, table, domestics, dress, dogs, and diamonds; her debts to be duly discharged, and a note advanced of five hundred by way of entrance.

Lord. Zounds, what a cormorant! she must be devilish handsome.

Sir Geo. I am told so.

Lord. To'd so! Why did you never see her?

Sir Geo. No; and possibly never may, but from my box at the Opera.

Lord. Hey-day! Why what the devil! —

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, you stare; I don't wonder at it. This is an elegant refinement, unknown to the gross voluptuaries of this part of the world. This is, Mr. Loader, what may be called a debt to your dignity: for an opera girl is as essential a piece of equipage for a man of fashion, as his coach.

Lord. The devil!

Sir Geo. 'Tis for the vulgar only to enjoy what they possess; the distinction of ranks and conditions are, to have hounds and never hunt; c o k s, and dine at taverns; houses, you never inhabit; mistresses, you never enjoy —

Lord. And debts, you never pay. Egad I am not surprized at it; if this be your trade, no wonder that you want money for necessities, when you give such a damn'd deal for nothing at all.

Enter Dick.

Dick. Mrs. Cole to wait upon your honour. [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. My dear Baron, run, dispatch my affair, conclude

clude my treaty, and thank her for the very reasonable conditions.

Sir Will. I fall.

Sir Geo. Mr. Loader, shall I trouble you to introduce the lady? She is, I think, your acquaintance.

Load. Who, old Moll? Ay, ay, she's your market-woman. I would not give sixpence for your signoras. One armful of good, wholesome British beauty, is worth a ship-load of their trapping, tawdry trollops. But hark'e, Baron, how much for the table? Why she must have a devilish large family, or a monstrous stomach.

Sir Will. Ay, ay, dere is her moder, la complaisante to walk in de park, and to go to de play; two broders, deux valets, dree Spanish lap-dogs, and de monkey. [*Exit.*]

Load. Strip me, if I would set five shillings against the whole gang. May my partner renounce with the game in his hand, if I were you, knight, if I would not—

Sir Geo. But the lady waits. [*Exit Load.*] A strange fellow this. What a whimsical jargon he talks. Not an idea abstracted from play. To say truth, I am sincerely sick of my acquaintance: but, however, I have the first people in the kingdom to keep me in countenance. Death and the dice level all distinctions.

Enter Mrs. Cole, supported by Loader and Dick.

Mrs. Cole. Gently, gently, good Mr. Loader.

Load. Come along, old Moll. Why, you jade, you look as rosy this morning, I must have a smack at your muns. Here, taste her, she is as good as old hock to get you a stomach.

Mrs. Cole. Fye, Mr. Loader, I thought you had forgot me.

Load. I forgot you! I would as soon forget what is trumps.

Mrs. Cole. Softly, softly, young man. There, there, mighty well. And how does your honour do? I han't seen your honour the——Oh! mercy on me, there's a twinge——

Sir Geo. What's the matter, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. My old disorder, the rheumatise; I han't been able to get a wink of——Oh la! what, you have been in town these two days?

Sir Geo. Since Wednesday.

Mrs. Cole. Ar! never once call'd upon old Cole. No, no, I am worn out, thrown by, and forgotten, like a tatter'd garment, as Mr Squintum says. Oh, he is a dear man! But for him I had been a lost sheep——There's your

your old friend, Kitty Carrot, at home still. What, shall we see you this evening? I have kept the Blue Room for you ever since I heard you were in town.

Load. What shall we take a snap at old Moll's? Hey, Beldam, have you a good batch of burgundy abroad?

Mrs. Cole. Bright as a ruby; and for flavour! You know the Colonel——He and Jenny Cummins drank three flasks, hand to fist, last night.

Load. What, and bilk thee of thy share?

Mrs. Cole. Ah, and don't mention it, Mr. Loader. No, that's all over with me. The time has been when I could have earned thirty shillings a day by my own drinking, and the next morning was neither sick nor sorry: but now, O laud, a thimbleful turns me topsyturvey.

Load. Poor old girl!

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I have done with these idle vanities; my thoughts are fix'd upon a better place. What I suppose, Mr. Loader, you will be for your old friend the black-ey'd girl, from Rosemary-lane. Ha, ha! Well 'tis a merry little tit. A thousand pities she's such a reprobate!—But she'll mend; her time is not come: all shall have their call, as Mr. Squintum says, sooner or later; reformation is not the work of a day. No, no, no.—Oh!

Sir Geo. Not worse, I hope.

Mrs. Cole. Rack, rack, gnaw, gnaw, never easy, a bed or up, all's one. Pray, honest friend, have you any clary, or mint-water in the house?

Dick. A case of French drams.

Mrs. Cole. Heaven defend me! I would not touch a dram for the world.

Sir Geo. They are but cordials, Mrs. Cole. Fetch 'em, you blockhead. [Exit Dick.]

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I am going, a wasting and a wasting, Sir George. What will become of the house when I am gone, heaven knows.——No.——When people are miss'd, then they are mourned. Sixteen years have I lived in the Garden, comfortably and creditably; and though I say it, could have got bail any hour of the day; Reputable tradesmen, Sir George, neighbours, Mr. Loader knows; no knock me down doings in my house. A set of regular, sedate, sober customers. Sixteen did I say—Ay, eighteen years have I paid scot and lot in the parish of St. Paul's, and during the whole time, no body has said, Mrs. Cole, black's the white of your eye? Unless twice that I was before Sir Thomas de Veil, and three times in the round-house.

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Nay, don't weep, Mrs. Cole.

Load. May I lose deal, with an honour at bottom, if old Moll does not bring tears into my eyes.

Mrs. Cole. However, it is a comfort, after all, to think one has passed through the world with credit and character. Ay, a good name, as Mr. Squintum says, is better than a gallipot of ointment.

Enter Dick with a case-bottle, and glass.

Load. Come haste, Dick, haste; sorrow is dry. Here, Moll, shall I fill thee a bumper?

Mrs. Cole. Hold, hold, Mr. Loader! Heaven help you, I could as soon swallow the Thames. Only a sip, to keep the gout out of my stomach. *[Exit Dick.]*

Load. Why then, here's to thee.—Levant me, but it is supernaculum.—Speak when you have enough.

Mrs. Cole. I won't trouble you for the glass; my hands so tremble and shake, I shall but spill the good creature.

Load. Well pull'd. But now to business. Pr'ythee, Moll, did not I see a tight young wench in a linen gown, knock at your door this morning?

Mrs. Cole. Ay; a young thing from the country.

Load. Could we not get a peep at her this evening?

Mrs. Cole. Impossible! She is engaged to Sir Timothy Trotter. I have taken earnest for her these three months.

Load. Pho, what signifies such a fellow as that! Tip him an old trader, and give her to the Knight.

Mrs. Cole. Tip him an old trader!—Mercy on us, where do you expect to go when you die, Mr. Loader?

Load. Crop me, but this Squintum has turn'd her brains.

Sir Geo. Nay, Mr. Loader, I think the gentleman has wrought a most happy reformation.

Mrs. Cole. Oh, it was a wonderful work. There had I been tossing in a sea of sin without rudder or compass: but at last Doctor Squintum stept in with a little soap-suds and sand of the Tabernacle, and scower'd my conscience till it became as bright as a pewter-platter. But however, Sir George, I hope I shall soon be able to furnish you.

Sir Geo. As how?

Mrs. Cole. I have advertised this morning in the Register Office, for servants under seventeen; and ten to one but I light on something that will do.

Sir Geo. Most likely!

Mrs. Cole. Truly, consistent with my conscience, I would do any thing for your honour.

Sir Geo. Right, Mrs. Cole, never lose sight of that. But pray, how long has this heavenly change been wrought in you?

Mrs. Cole. Ever since my last visitation of the gout. Upon my first fit, seven years ago, I began to have my doubts, and my waverings; but I was lost in a labyrinth, and no body to shew me the road. One time I thought of dying a Roman, which is truly a comfortable communion enough for one of us; but it would not do.

Sir Geo. Why not?

Mrs. Cole. I went one summer over to Boulogne to repent; and would you believe it? the bare-footed, bald-pated beggars would not give me absolution, without I quitted my business——Did you ever hear of such a set of scabby damn'd rascals——Besides, I could not bear their barbarity. Would you believe it, Mr. Loader, they lock up for their lives, in a nunnery, the prettiest, sweetest, tender, young things:——Oh, fix of them, for a season, would finish my business here, and then I should have nothing to do, but to think of hereafter.

Load. Brand me, what a country!

Sir Geo. Oh, scandalous!

Enter Dick.

Dick. Mr. Smirk, Sir, has sent to know if your honour be at home.

Sir Geo. Mrs. Cole, I am mortified to part with you. But business, you know——

Mrs. Cole. True, Sir George. Mr. Loader, your arm——Gently, oh, oh!

Sir Geo. Would you take another thimbleful, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. Not a drop—I shall see you this evening?

Sir Geo. Depend upon me.

Mrs. Cole. To-morrow I hope to suit you——We are to have, at the Tabernacle, an occasional hymn, with a thanksgiving sermon for my recovery. After which, I shall call at the Register Office, and see what goods my advertisement has brought in.

Sir Geo. Extremely obliged to you, Mrs. Cole.

Mrs. Cole. Well, heaven bless you——Softly, have a care, Mr. Loader——Richard, you may as well give me the bottle into the chair, for fear I should be taken ill on the road. Gently——so, so!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I. *A chamber at Sir George's.**Enter Sir George, meeting Dick.*

Dick. **S**IR, here's the young woman, Madame Cole spoke of; poor soul seems all over in a frustration. [Exit.]

Enter Lucy.

Sir Geo. Upon my credit, a fine figure! Aukward——
Can't produce her publickly as mine;—will you be seated, Miss?—Pr'ythee, why so coy?

Lucy. O, Sir.*Sir Geo.* Child!*Lucy.* If you have any humanity, spare me.

Sir Geo. In tears! what can this mean? Artifice. A project to raise the price, I suppose. Look'e, my dear, you may save this piece of Pathetic for another occasion. It won't do with me; I am no novice—So child, a truce to your tragedy, I beg.

Lucy. Indeed you wrong me, Sir; indeed you do.

Sir Geo. Wrong you! how came you here, and for what purpose?

Lucy. A shameful one. I know it all, and yet, believe me, Sir, I am innocent.

Sir Geo. Oh, I don't question that. Your pious patroness is a proof of your innocence

Lucy. What can I say to gain your credit? And yet, Sir, strong as appearances are against me, by all that's holy, you see me here, a poor distressed, involuntary victim.

Sir Geo. Her style's above the common class; her tears are real.—Rise, child.—How the poor creature trembles!

Lucy. Say then I am safe.*Sir Geo.* Fear nothing.*Lucy.* May heaven reward you. I cannot.

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee, child, collect yourself, and help me to unravel this mystery. You came hither willingly? There was no force?

Lucy. None.*Sir Geo.* You know Mrs. Cole.*Lucy.* Too well.*Sir Geo.* How came you then to trust her?*Lucy.* Mine, Sir, is a tedious, melancholy tale.*Sir Geo.* And artless too?*Lucy.* As innocence.*Sir Geo.* Be just, and you will find me generous.*Lucy.* On that, Sir, I relied on venturing hither.

Sir Geo. You did me justice. Trust me with all your story.

story. If you deserve, depend upon my protection.

Lucy. Some months ago, Sir, I was considered as the joint heiress of a respectable, wealthy merchant; dear to my friends, happy in my prospects, and my father's favourite.

Sir Geo. His name.

Lucy. There you must pardon me. Unkind and cruel tho' he has been to me, let me discharge the duty of a daughter, suffer in silence, nor bring reproach on him who gave me being.

Sir Geo. I applaud your piety.

Lucy. At this happy period, my father, judging an addition of wealth must bring an increase of happiness, resolved to unite me with a man sordid in his mind, brutal in his manners, and riches his only recommendation. My refusal of this ill-suited match, tho' mildly given, enflamed my father's temper, naturally choleric, alienated his affections, and banish'd me his house, distressed and destitute.

Sir Geo. Would no friend receive you?

Lucy. Alas, how few are friends to the unfortunate! Besides, I knew, Sir, such a step would be considered by my father, as an appeal from his justice. I therefore retired to a remote corner of the town, trusting, as my only advocate, to the tender calls of nature, in his cool, reflecting hours.

Sir Geo. How came you to know this woman?

Lucy. Accident placed me in a house, the mistress of which professed the same principles with my infamous conductress. There, as enthusiasm is the child of melancholy, I caught their infection. A constant attendance on their assemblies procured me the acquaintance of this woman, whose extraordinary zeal and devotion first drew my attention and confidence. I trusted her with my story, and, in return, received the warmest invitation to take the protection of her house. This I unfortunately accepted.

Sir Geo. Unfortunately, indeed!

Lucy. I will not trouble you with a recital of the arts used to seduce me: happily they have hitherto fail'd. But this morning I was acquainted with my destiny; and no other election left me, but immediate compliance, or a jail. In this desperate condition, you cannot wonder, Sir, at my choosing rather to rely on the generosity of a gentleman, than the humanity of a creature insensible to pity, and void of every virtue.

Sir Geo. The event shall justify your choice. You have my faith and honour for your security. For tho' I can't boast of my own goodness, yet I have an honest feeling for afflicted

afflicted virtue ; and, however unfashionable, a spirit that dares to afford it protection. Give me your hand. As soon as I have dispatched some pressing business here, I will lodge you in an asylum, sacred to the distresses of your sex ; where indigent beauty is guarded from temptations, and deluded innocence rescued from infamy. [*Exit Lucy.*]

Enter Dick.

Dick. Mr. Smirk, the auctioneer.

Sir Geo. Shew him in, by all means.

[*Exit Dick.*]

Enter Shift as Smirk.

Smirk. You are the principal.

Sir Geo. Even so. I have, Mr. Smirk, something of a considerable value, which I want to dispose of immediately.

Smirk. You have.

Sir Geo. Could you assist me ?

Smirk. Doubtless.

Sir Geo. But directly ?

Smirk. We have an auction at twelve. I'll add your cargo to the catalogue.

Sir Geo. Can that be done ?

Smirk. Every day's practice ; it is for the credit of the sale. Last week, amongst the valuable effects of a gentleman, going abroad, I sold a choice collection of china, with a curious service of plate ; though the real party was never master of above two delf dishes, and a dozen of pewter, in all his life.

Sir Geo. Very artificial. But this must be conceal'd.

Smirk. Buried here. Oh, many an aigrette and solitaire have I sold, to discharge a lady's play-debt. But then we must know the parties, otherwise it might be knock'd down to the husband himself. Ha, ha——Hey ho !

Sir Geo. True. Upon my word, your profession requires parts.

Smirk. Nobody's more. Did you ever hear, Sir George, what first brought me into this business ?

Sir Geo. Never.

Smirk. Quite an accident, as I may say. You must have known my predecessor, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world in his way, aye, or that ever was, or ever will be ; quite a jewel of a man ; he would touch you up a lot ; there was no resisting him. He would force you to bid whether you would or no. I shall never see his equal.

Sir Geo. You are modest, Mr. Smirk.

Smirk. No, no, but his shadow. Far be it from me to vie with that great man. But as I was saying, my predecessor,

cessor, Mr. Prig, was to have a sale as it might be on a Saturday. On Friday, at noon, I shall never forget the day, he was suddenly seized with a violent cholic. He sent for me to his bed-side, squeezed me by the hand; Dear Smirk, said he, what an accident! You know what is to-morrow; the greatest show this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; every body in the world will be there; Lady Dy Jofs, Mrs. Nankyn, the Duchess of Dupe, and every body at all: you see my state, it will be impossible for me to mount. What can I do? It was not for me, you know, to advise that great man.

Sir Geo. No, no.

Smirk At last looking wishfully at me, Smirk, says he, d'you love me? Mr. Prig, can you doubt it?—I'll put it to the test, says he; supply my place to-morrow.—I, eager to shew my love, rashly and rapidly replied, I will.

Sir Geo. That was bold.

Smirk. Absolute madness! but I had gone too far to recede. Then the point was, to prepare for the awful occasion. The first want that occurred to me was a wig. but this was too material an article to depend upon my own judgment; I resolved to consult my friends. I told them the affair—You hear, gentlemen, what has happened; Mr. Prig, one of the greatest men in his way the world ever saw, or ever will, quite a jewel of a man, taken with a violent fit of the cholic; to-morrow, the greatest show this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; every body in the world will be there; Lady Dy Jofs, Mrs. Nankyn, Duchess of Dupe, and all mankind; it being impossible he should mount, I have consented to sell—They stared—It is true, gentlemen. Now I should be glad to have your opinion as to a wig. They were divided: some recommended a tye, others a bag: one mentioned a bob, but was soon over-ruled. Now, for my part, I own I rather inclined to the bag; but to avoid the imputation of rashness, I resolved to take Mrs. Smirk's judgment, my wife, a dear good woman, fine in figure, high in taste, a superior genius, and knows old China like a Nabob

Sir Geo. What was her decision?

Smirk. I told her the case—My dear, you know what has happened. My good friend, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world, in his way, that ever was, or ever will be, quite a jewel of a man, a violent fit of the cholic—the greatest show this season, to morrow pictures, and every thing

every thing in the world ; all the world will be there ; now, as it is impossible he should, I mount in his stead. You know the importance of a wig ; I have asked my friends—some recommended a tye, others a bag——what is your opinion ? Why, to deal freely, Mr. Smirk, says she, a tye for your round, regular, smiling face, would be rather too formal, and a bag too boyish, deficient in dignity for the solemn occasion ; were I worthy to advise, you should wear a something between both —— I'll be hang'd if you don't mean a major. I jump't at the hint, and a major it was.

Sir Geo. So, that was fixt.

Smirk. Finally. But next day, when I came to mount the rostrum, then was the trial. My limbs shok, and my tongue trembled. The first lot was a chamber-utensil, in Chelsea-china, of the pea-green pattern. It occasioned a great laugh ; but I got thro' it. Her Grace, indeed, gave me great encouragement. I overheard her whisper Lady Dy, upon my word, Mr. Smirk does it every well. Very well, indeed, Mr. Smirk, addressing herself to me. I made an acknowledging bow to her Grace, as in-duty bound. But one flower flounced involuntarily from me that day, as I may say. I remember Dr. Trifle called it enthusiastic, and pronounced it a presage of my future greatness.

Sir Geo. What was that ?

Smirk. Why, Sir, the lot was a Guido ? a single figure, a marvellous fine performance ; well preserved, and highly finish'd. It stuck at five and forty ; I, charmed with the picture, and piqued at the people, A going for five and forty, no body more than five and forty ? —— Pray, ladies and gentlemen, look at this piece, quite flesh and blood, and only wants a touch from the torch of Prometheus, to start from the canvass and sail a bidding. A general plaudit ensued, I bowed, and in three minutes knock'd it down at sixty-three, ten.

Sir Geo. I'm afraid, Mr. Smirk, that like Alexander, you'll not leave a successor.

Smirk. O yes, I believe I shall survive in my boy. A fine hand at a hammer ; to be sure he made a trifling mistake, t'other day ; knock'd down a man instead of a lot : but he made a pretty apology in the news-papers—
Ha ! ha !—Heigho !

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II. *Enter Sir William and Richard Wealby.*

R. Weal. Well, I suppose by this time, you are satisfied

fied what a scoundrel you have brought into the world, and are ready to finish your foolery.

Sir Will. Got to the catastrophe, good brother?

R. Weal. Let us have it over then.

Sir Will. I have already alarm'd all his tradesmen. I suppose we shall soon have him here, with a legion of bailiffs and constables — Oh, you have my will about you?

R. Weal. Yes, yes.

Sir Will. It is almost time to produce it or read him the clause that relates to his rejecting your daughter. That will do his business. But they come. I must return to my character.

Enter Sir George, driving in two gamesters.

Sir Geo. Rascals! Robbers! that like the locust, mark the road you have taken, by the ruin and desolation you leave behind you. And can youth, however cautious, be guarded against such deep laid, complicated villainy? Where are the rest of your diabolical crew? your auctioneer, usurer, and ——— O Sir, you are here? I am glad you have not escaped us, however.

Sir Will. What de devil is the matter?

Sir Geo. Your birth, which I believe an imposition, preserves you, however, from the discipline those rogues have received. A baron, a nobleman, a sharper! O shame! It is enough to banish all confidence from the word. On whose faith can we rely, when those, whose honour is held as sacred as an oath, unmindful of their dignity, descend to rival pick-pockets in their infamous arts. What are these [pulls out dice] pretty implements? The fruits of your leisure hours! They are dexterously done. You have a fine mechanical turn. *Enter Dick.*

Dick. The constables, Sir.

[*Enter Constables.*]

Sir Geo. Let them come in, that I may consign these gentlemen to their care. [To *Sir Will.*] Your letters of nobility you will produce in a court of justice. Tho' if I read you right, you are one of those indigent, itinerant nobles of your own creation, which our reputation for hospitality draws hither in shoals, to the shame of our understanding, the impairing of our fortunes, and, when you are trusted, the betraying of our designs. Officers, do your duty.

Sir Will. Why, don't you know me?

Sir Geo. Just as I guess'd. An impostor. He has recover'd the free use of his tongue already.

Sir Will. Nay, but George.

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Insolent familiarity ! away with him.

Sir Will. Hold, hold, a moment. Brother Richard, fet this matter to rights.

R. Weal. Don't you know him ?

Sir Geo. Know him ! the very question is an affront.

R. Weal. Nay, I don't wonder at it. 'Tis your father, you fool.

Sir Geo. My father ! Impossible !

Sir Will. That may be, but 'tis true.

Sir Geo. My father alive ! Thus let me greet the blessing.

Sir Will. Alive ! Ay, and I believe I shan't be in a hurry to die again.

Sir Geo. But, dear Sir, the report of your death——and this disguise——to what——

Sir Will. Don't ask any questions. Your uncle will tell you all. For my part, I am sick of the scheme.

R. Weal. I told you what would come of your politics.

Sir Will. You did so. But if it had not been for those clumsy seconds, the plot was a good plot.—O George, such discoveries I have to make. Within I'll unravel the whole.

Sir Geo. It is impossible, gentlemen to determine your fate, till this matter is more fully explain'd ; till when, keep 'em in safe custody. [*Ex. Constables and Gamesters.* Do you know them, Sir ?

Sir Will. Yes, but that's more than they did me. I can cancel your debts there, and, I believe, prevail on those gentlemen to refund too—But you have been a sad profligate young dog, George.

Sir Geo. I can't boast of my goodness, Sir, but I think I could produce you a proof that I am not totally destitute of——

Sir Will. Ay ! why then prythee do.

Sir Geo. I have, Sir, this day, resisted a temptation, that greater pretenders to morality might have yielded to. But I will trust myself no longer, and must crave your interposition and protection.

Sir Will. To what ?

Sir Geo. I will attend you with an explanation in an instant. [*Exit.*

And re enter with Lucy.

Fear nothing, Madam, you may safely rely on the——

Lucy. My father !

R. Weal. Lucy !

Lucy.

Lucy. O, Sir, can you forgive your poor distressed unhappy girl? You scarce can guess how hardly I've been used since my banishment from your paternal roof. Want, pining want, anguish, and shame, have been my constant partners.

Sir Will. Brother !

Sir Geo. Sir !

Lucy. Father !

R. Weal. Rise, child, 'tis I must ask thee forgiveness. Canst thou forget the woes I've made thee suffer? Come to my arms once more, thou darling of my age.—What mischief had my rashness nearly completed. Nephew, I scarce can thank you, as I ought, but ——

Sir Geo. I am richly paid in being the happy instrument—Yet, might I urge a wish——

R. Will. Name it.

Sir Geo. That you would forgive my follies of to-day ; and, as I have been providentially the occasional guardian of your daughter's honour, that you would bestow on me that right for life.

R. Weal. That must depend on Lucy ; her will, not mine, shall now direct her choice—What says your father?

Sir Will. Me ! Oh, I'll shew you in an instant. Give me your hands. There, children, now you are join'd, and the devil take him that wishes to part you.

Sir Geo. I thank you for us both. And now, Sir, I hope your fears for me are over ; for had I not this motive to restrain my follies, yet I now know the town too well to be ever its bubble, and will take care to preserve, at least,

Some more estate, and principles, and wit,
Than brokers, bawds, and gamesters shall think fit.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END.

